

Cabinet

Thursday 25 November 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Bell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Andy Crump
Councillor Andy Jenns
Councillor Jeff Morgan
Councillor Wallace Redford

Others Present

Councillors Jonathan Chilvers, Judy Falp, John Holland and Jerry Roodhouse.

1. General

Death of Kieran Amos, former Chief Fire Officer

The Leader reflected on the sad announcement that former Chief Fire Officer, Kieran Amos had passed away on 23 November 2021. Councillor Seccombe stated that Mr Amos was hugely loved and admired with an enormously warm personality and the thoughts of the Council Members, officers and all Warwickshire County Council staff were with Mr Amos' family and the Fire & Rescue Service as they reflected on their loss. Elected Members would be able to appropriately pay tribute to Mr Amos at the forthcoming Full Council meeting.

Cabinet stood in memory of Kieran Amos.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Kam Kaur and Heather Timms.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 November 2021 were agreed as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair.



(4) Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

2. Quarter 2 Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2021 to September 2021)

Councillor Andy Jenns (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's performance set against the targets contained in the Corporate Plan. There were 54 Key Business Measures (KBMs) in the framework and overall, the Council continued to maintain its robust performance across the board in the face of increased and changing demand due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant changes in how services were delivered. As restrictions were lifted, Council Services had begun to focus more resource on their core work and less on specific Covid responses, which was now being reflected in KBM performance. Councillor Jenns concluded by noting that a comprehensive review of the entire Framework was underway, ready for implementation in 2022/23.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse noted that despite the overall performance, some indicators were predicted to remain static, and he hoped that some improvement would be seen by Quarter 3, particularly around living independently and supported living. Councillor Margaret Bell responded that these were crucial areas of service and that the area would be undergoing a review to consider service improvements.

Councillor Roodhouse also reflected on crime figures in relation to cyber crime, suggested that Councillors and Officers meet to consider the data being collected to support the Council's approach to this crime. Councillor Andy Crump responded that the increasing prevalence of cyber crime was being considered by the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board. He noted that Trading Standards had a significant social media presence to warn of scams targeting the vulnerable but he also acknowledged that there was more that could be done in this arena.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes progress on the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

3. 2021-22 Financial Monitoring - Forecast position as at Quarter 2

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) summarised the published report which provided an update on the Council's financial performance. The report compared favourably with quarter 1, given the movement from the reported £3m net overspend in quarter 1 to a small net underspend in quarter 2. Councillor Butlin highlighted key points from the report including the reduction in the headline revenue forecast, increased Covid funding from Central Government since quarter 1, an overall reduction in forecast service spending for the Resources Directorate and Corporate Services, off-set by increasing demand pressures in Children and to a lesser extent Adults, and a significant reduction in the SEND deficit. He went on to outline the position with regard to Covid funding, noted that the overall delivery of Medium Term Financial Strategy savings remained strong and noted a forecast overall reduction in the Capital programme.



Councillor Jerry Roodhouse raised concerns that the Covid grants may be masking some financial pressures, and highlighted disability, mental health and hospital discharge as areas where long term sustainable funding was required. Councillor Butlin responded that it was difficult to anticipate the pressure on mental health and that the Council continued to lobby government on this issue. He was aware of the pressures within the authority and whilst more money to deal with those pressures would be welcome, he felt that the overall financial position was reasonable.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the adjusted forecast underspend of £0.114m that would contribute to the Directorate and General Risk Reserves at the end of 2021/22.
2. Notes the forecast under-delivery of the 2021/22 savings requirement to the value of £0.726m.
3. Notes the forecast capital spend for 2021/22 of £168.424m, of which £151.433m is capital payments controllable by the County Council and the balance, of £16.991m, relates to schemes funded by s278 developer contributions where the timing is not directly controllable by the Council.
4. Approves the carry forward of the reprofiled spend on the capital programme of £15.590m in 2021/22 into future years and notes the carry forward of s278 contributions of £15.871m that is not directly controllable by the Council.

4. Treasury Management Monitoring Report

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) presented this report which updated Cabinet on Treasury Management, as summarised at paragraph 1.3 of the report.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes the Treasury Management activity and performance in respect of the first 6 months of the 21/22 financial year.

5. 2020-21 Annual Governance Statement

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) presented the Annual Governance Statement which had changed slightly from previous years to reflect the fact that it was underpinned by the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance. This had resulted in a slimmed down Statement compared to previous years.

Resolved:

That Cabinet endorses the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement and recommends it to Full Council for approval.

6. Climate Change Action Plans

In the absence of Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture), Councillor Isobel Secombe (Leader) introduced this report which sought approval of funding from the Climate Change Investment Fund to take forward ambitions to work across the region with



partners to deliver a Net Zero by 2050 Climate Change Action Plan. Councillor Seccombe shared details of the notable progress that had been made over the previous 18 months to deliver on the Climate Change Programme. Using the momentum from COP26, the Council needed to do further work to broaden the scope, capacity and skills of its climate change programme, by doing focussed, detailed and costed action planning in order to provide clarity on the funding required to be a net zero Council by 2030, and to achieve a net zero county by no later than 2050. The latter target required partnership working and contributions from across the public sector and with other sectors in the sub-region. The aim was to unify public sector action with a joint action plan for 2050. The funding sought in the report would allow these actions to progress at an early stage.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers pointed out the intentions of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to be net zero by 2041. Given the poor odds of avoiding catastrophic climate change if net zero was reached by 2050, he suggested that the Council should be aligning its aims with those of the WMCA.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the report as a move in the right direction, and supported concerns that the 2050 target was too late. He noted the cross-boundary implications for services such as transport and, therefore, the need to work with partners. He asked whether there had been a cost benefit analysis completed for the work. Whilst he appreciated the need to fund the proposals he stated that it would be important to avoid the bureaucracy that would stymie delivery.

The Leader clarified that the intention was to be a net zero Council by 2030 and the 2050 target was Warwickshire-wide. This required a lot of work with the business and public sectors but she emphasised that anything that could be achieved before 2050 would be. There was a commitment to work with business and it was important to provide realistic, affordable and achievable targets for the sector.

At 2.19pm, during consideration of this item, the meeting was adjourned due to the sounding of a fire alarm. The meeting reconvened at 2.50pm.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the allocation of £200,000 from the Climate Change Investment Fund to take forward work across the sub-region with partners to deliver a response to COP26, using the funding to deliver the actions set out in section 2 of the report.

7. Community Powered Warwickshire Ground Breaker, Partner Mobilisation and Mainstreaming Phases

In the absence of Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture), Councillor Isobel Seccombe (Leader) presented this report which provided details on Community Powered Warwickshire Ground Breakers, Partner Mobilisation and Mainstreaming phases and sought approval for the next steps around the programme.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:



1. Notes the completed analysis phase of the Community Powered Warwickshire programme, as set out in section 3 of the report.
2. Approves the proposed next steps for the ground breaker, partner mobilisation and mainstreaming phases of the programme, as set out in sections 4 to 6 of the report.

8. Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Autism Strategy

This report was introduced by Councillor Margaret Bell (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health) who reflected on the development of this five year strategy with partners, noting the co-production and mapping activity by experts in the field to develop a shared understanding and build upon good practice to address gaps in service provision. She noted that there was close alignment with the national Autism Strategy (2021-2026) which launched in July 2021, although the priorities were described differently. She noted that a key difference with the national strategy was the national strategy's focus on improving diagnostic waiting times which did not reflect Warwickshire's ambition to ensure that, whilst prompt access to a diagnosis was imperative, it was also of importance for people to access support without needing a diagnosis and were not excluded from services on the basis of their diagnosis.

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children and Families) welcomed the strategy, noting its importance for up to 1000 young people in Warwickshire who it was believed may be autistic. He noted that research showed that young people with autism suffered inequalities in terms of self-harming, within the criminal justice system, suffering social isolation and achieving poorer educational outcomes. He further noted the considerable disparity between genders which required further investigation.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the strategy and the work that had gone into its production. Noting that the report would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in due course, he commented on increasing demand and waiting times, precision in the action plan, redesign of pathways and neurodevelopmental works, links to integration and place, gaps in the workforce and future workforce.

Councillor Bell responded that colleagues were looking at methods to extend the number and type of people that were able to carry out diagnostics, so that psychiatrists could concentrate their skills on the more complex cases. She noted the link with the SEND strategy and the Place Partnership Strategy for Coventry and Warwickshire. She advised that annual action plans would be produced to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy.

Resolved:

That Cabinet

1. Endorses the joint All Age Autism Strategy for Coventry and Warwickshire 2021-26.
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for People (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health and the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families & Education) to approve the Strategy Delivery Plans and Written Statements of Action for each year.



9. Gas Contract Renewal

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) presented this report which sought approval to enter into a framework contract for the purchase of gas through ESPO's Gas Framework, for the period April 2023 – March 2027. Councillor Butlin reflected on the substantial increases in gas prices in the market and the significant buying power which was leveraged by ESPO, including the opportunity to forward buy. He noted that initial indications suggested an overall increase in energy costs of around 30% over the next 2 years should be anticipated. Although there was an option to consider a green energy tariff, this would add an additional immediate 30% increase and it was therefore preferred that the environment and energy team explore alternative strategies for beginning to move to cost effective green energies.

Resolved:

That Cabinet agree to the Council entering a framework contract for the purchase of gas through ESPO's Gas Framework, for the period April 2023 – March 2027 on terms and conditions considered acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property.

10. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. Exempt Minutes of the 14 October 2021 Meeting of Cabinet

The exempt minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 October 2021 were agreed.

12. HROD and Payroll System Contract

Resolved:

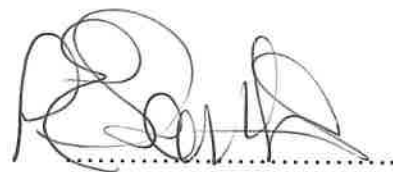
The recommendations were agreed as set out in the exempt minutes

13. Cubbington Site Options

Resolved:

The recommendations were agreed as set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting rose at 3.30pm



Chair